

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (original) A steering apparatus for a vehicle comprising:

a body-side bracket attached to the vehicle body;

a column assembly supported by said body-side bracket and consisting of an inner column for supporting a steering shaft to be rotatable and an outer jacket for supporting said inner column to be movable in the axial direction; and

telescopic clamping means for fixing the steering shaft at an adjustment position by clamping said inner column through said outer jacket,

wherein said outer jacket is provided with a slit entirely along the axial direction.

2. (original) A steering apparatus for a vehicle according to Claim 1, wherein the steering shaft is supported to be rotatable at least at two points in said inner column, and said steering shaft is extendable and

contractible outside said inner column in the axial direction and on a lower side thereof.

3. (currently amended) A steering apparatus for a vehicle according to Claim 1-~~or~~2, wherein said inner column is expanded into a deformed non-circular form and the inner diameter of said outer jacket is also shaped into a deformed portion non-circular form correspondingly thereto.

4. (currently amended) A steering apparatus for a vehicle according to Claim 1-~~or~~2, wherein said inner column is provided with an axial stopper member for preventing rotation which is extended from said inner column to pass through said slit.

5. (original) A steering column apparatus for a vehicle comprising:

an inner column for supporting a steering shaft to be rotatable;

an outer jacket for supporting said inner column from the outer peripheral side thereof; and

a bracket for supporting said outer jacket so as to adjust the position thereof on a body-side strength member; and

a clamping mechanism for releasing a clamped state in which the position of said outer jacket is fixed to said bracket and the position of said outer jacket fixed to said bracket so as to allow position adjustment,

wherein said outer jacket has a portion for pressing and supporting said steering column from the outer diameter side of said steering column, and

said portion for pressing and supporting is formed with a slit entirely along the axial direction of the steering.

6. (original) A steering apparatus for a vehicle according to Claim 5, wherein:

the outer jacket has a retaining portion with the minimum inner diameter portion for pressing and retaining the inner column from the outer peripheral side thereof and a cylindrical inner diameter portion which is connected to said retaining portion through an inclined step portion and which is extended in the axial direction

with the inner diameter portion larger than said retaining portion;

said inner column comprises a cylindrical outer diameter portion with a predetermined length which is partially pressed and supported by said retaining portion with the minimum inner diameter from the outer diameter side thereof and which is extended in the axial direction to face said cylindrical inner diameter portion and a large outer diameter portion which is connected to said cylindrical outer diameter portion through the inclined step portion, is pressed and supported by said cylindrical inner diameter portion, and has a diameter larger than that of said cylindrical outer diameter portion.

7. (original) A steering apparatus for a vehicle according to Claim 6, wherein:

said inner column supports the steering shaft at two points in the axial direction through bearings; and a bearing on a lower side, out of said bearings, is provided at a lower end of said cylindrical outer diameter portion.

8. (new) A steering apparatus for a vehicle according to Claim 2, wherein said inner column is expanded into a deformed non-circular form and the inner diameter of said outer jacket is also shaped into a deformed portion non-circular form correspondingly thereto.

9. (new) A steering apparatus for a vehicle according to Claim 2, wherein said inner column is provided with an axial stopper member for preventing rotation which is extended from said inner column to pass through said slit.